

WASHINGTON – U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk today issued the following statement following an announcement by the Department of Homeland Security that the State of Illinois will not enforce its law prohibiting employers from verifying the legal status of their employees:

“We should always support the basic right of Americans to verify the legal status of a potential employee. E-Verify remains the most effective tool for our citizens to screen job applicants. I am pleased that Governor Blagojevich wisely backed down and will no longer enforce an unconstitutional state restriction against a federal right now recognized in 49 other states.”

The Basic Pilot Program, or E-Verify, is a free, Internet-based system providing employers real-time links to the Social Security Administration database and immigration records to quickly verify the legal status of potential employees. In 2001, then-U.S. Rep. Blagojevich joined with every member of Congress to unanimously pass the Basic Pilot Extension Act of 2001, extending the right to verify the legal status of potential employees to every American employer.

Over 22,000 American employers use the E-Verify system that has processed almost three million requests. Over 800 employers join this system each week.

On September 24, 2007, the United States of America filed suit against the State of Illinois in the U.S. District Court Central District of Illinois seeking to overturn a state law prohibiting employers from using E-Verify, which is available in all other states.

Days later, Congressman Kirk introduced H.Res. 685, a congressional resolution calling on Gov. Blagojevich to file an amicus brief siding with the federal government and calling on the General Assembly to repeal the state law.